abnormally in Ordnance Parachute Factory for want of supplies of raw material;

(b) whether only a selected few suppliers have been given orders for supply of raw material despite large number of approved list of bonafide suppliers having been given by DGQA;

(c) whether supplies of other suppliers than a chosen few by OPF are being rejected without any valid reason; and

(d) whether any enquiry has been ordered; if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES): (a) to (d) There has been no delay in the production of Float Assembly for want of raw material. Regular tender enquiries for the main raw material 'Rubberised Fabric' are being issued to all established suppliers from the DGQA approved list of sources. No tenders have been issued to firms other than DGQA approved sources.

Orders have been placed on merit of the offers against tenders, strictly in accordance with the tender rules. The materials are inspected by DGQA representatives and rejection if any, are based on definite technical shortcomming noticed during the process of manufacture;

Assessment of Regional Security Environment

4605. SHRI KRISHNA KUMAR BIRLA: Will the Minsiter of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether a panel formed by Government to discuss ways to strengthen defence has recently made an assessment of the regional security environment and need for timely preparation for future battlefield scenario;

(b) if so, whether Government's preparedness in defence is questionable; and

(c) if not, what other steps Government propose to take to meet any challenge?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES): (a) No specific panel was formed by the Government on this matter. However an assessment of the security environment is a continuous process and all relevant steps are being taken to meet any eventuality.

(b) and (c) Government are continuously engaged in the process of improving the defence preparedness of the country including through the creation of an effective deterrent against the use of or the threat of use of weapons of mass destruction against India.

Enquiry into Disappearance of Y. Sanamacha

4606. SHRI W. ANGOU SINGH: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the Defence Minister has given an assurance not to interfere in the judicial enquiry instituted by Government of Manipur regarding the missing of Y. Sanamacha;

(b) whether the enquiry committee constituted has since completed its enquiry and submitted its reports; and

(c) if so, the action taken thereon?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES): (a) to (c) The legal competence of the State Government of Manipur to constitute a Commission of Inquiry in the matter is under consideration of the Hon'ble High Court of Guwahati. The Raksha Mantri has only given an assurance that there will be no effort on the part of the Government and the Army authorities to conceal the truth.

The Army Court of Inquiry constituted earlier has opined that there has been no